

2 Kings 5

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[0 : 00] Elisha the prophet is at the very center of this story of Naaman being healed from his leprosy.

And Elisha, he was a prophet in Israel for around 40 years.

And the account that the scripture gives of his years of ministry ranged from 2 Kings 2 right through to 2 Kings 13.

And within that span of time, Elisha performed many miracles among the people.

For example, in the chapter immediately before this, we have an account of a number of miracles, including the miracle that Elisha had performed in relation to the widow of one of the sons of the prophets, whose husband had died and people who came to collect their debts, she couldn't pay them.

[1 : 16] And he wanted to take her two sons in lieu of the outstanding debt. And you remember that she came to the prophet Elisha and he said to her, Do you have any oil, a vessel with oil?

And she said, Yes. Well, you go and collect as many other empty vessels as you possibly can. And she did that. And she said, Close the door on you and start pouring the oil from the vessel that you've got into all the other vessels.

So that she was able to fill all the other vessels she had collected out of this little jar she had had originally. And then it says the oil stayed. In other words, once she ran out of vessels, there was no more extra oil.

And she told her, You go and sell all the oil and pay off your debt. And she did that. And another story in the same chapter, chapter 4, the account of the raising of the little boy who had died.

The son of the great woman of Shunem, who had died seemingly because of son's throat. He complained of his head, his head, and he was taken into the house and he quite soon after that died.

[2 : 40] The mother went for help to Elisha the prophet. And he came and through his ministrations, the child came back to life.

And there are many other accounts of the way the Lord used the ministry of Elisha in a marvellous and miraculous way. And we see this particular chapter 5 now. And it begins with an account of a man who was the commander of the army of the king of Syria.

And he had a particular problem because he was a leper. And a little girl who had been brought back as a captive from the land of Israel, the man who waited upon Neiman's wife, she recommended that her master Neiman should go to Elisha in Israel, that he would heal him from his leprosy.

And I'd just like to say a few words under four headings in relation to all that happened in this situation in relation to Neiman and his healing.

First of all, Neiman himself, his greatness. Secondly, his problem. Despite his greatness, he had a real problem. He was a leper.

[4 : 07] Thirdly, it says here, he was enraged when he heard the response of Elisha to him when he came with his problem to the door of Elisha.

His rage. Disappointment. Rage. And fourthly and finally, after his servants recent with Neiman, he eventually went down into the water and he dipped himself seven times as the prophet had commanded and he was healed.

And fourthly, he was a re-reported by his submission. And fourthly, he was a re-reported by his great.

First of all, he was commander of the army of the king of Syria. And it says that he was a great and honourable man in the eyes of his master because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria.

It seems that during these times, for somebody to stay at the top of his game, at the pinnacle of his position, he would have not only to prove himself on one occasion, that is win one battle, but he had to continue to show his success in battle time and time and time again.

[5 : 45] And that's the kind of man Neiman was. Not only was he commander of the army of the king of Syria in name, but he secured that position for a prolonged period of time because of his continued success in battle.

He was obviously a mighty man of valor. He was obviously a man full of military tactics that outwitted the enemy on time after time.

And because of his success in that way, the king of Syria thought he was a great man. He was great and honourable in the eyes of his master.

And one can expect that that kind of success and position, it would guarantee him a good measure of social status.

I mean, he wouldn't be rubbing shoulders with the common people in Syria. Certainly he was head of the army. But think of all the banquets in the palace of the king of Syria.

[6 : 53] One of the most important people there, repeatedly, would be Neiman the commander of the army. He was a man who rubbed shoulders with the high society of his day.

And what's more, when it says here that he was a mighty man of valor. I was looking this up in the original Hebrew words.

And the impression one gets from the use of these words together. A mighty man of valor. He was a warlike man. A powerful man. And I believe every time you walk into a room, he would have particular presence.

There are some people like that. You can't help but notice when they come in. They're there. Other people that can come in and stay and go.

And nobody really notices them. But this man, he had real presence. And especially he was eye-catching when he wore his military garments and military medals.

[8 : 02] And all of these things, people's heads turned when this man walked in. He was a great man. And honorable in the eyes of his master.

Because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor. And I suppose some of us know people just like that.

People who are successful in business. People who are successful in their line of work. Maybe in their studies and in their researches and so on.

There are people who sort of catch your attention. And everywhere you go, if you meet up with them, well, you tell at home that you've met such and such a person.

It's as if they leave a mark upon your mind. Naaman the Syrian. But that's not the whole story, is it?

[9 : 02] When Naaman would go home from his functions and he would take off his uniform. There it was.

Leprosy was still there. He was able to cover it up. He was able in some way or other to associate with people, despite the fact that he was a leper.

Nevertheless, when he went into his own room and he took off his outward clothing, there the problem still remained.

And I think it's true to say that with most people, there's a but in their lives.

Yes, they're successful. Yes, they're strong. Yes, they're good. Breadwinners for their family. And so on. But all the time, when you peel away the layers, as it were, that they keep to the forefront when they're dealing with people and when they're living their ordinary lives every day, when they peel these things off at night, there is the sin of their life.

[10 : 26] Maybe it's something from a way back. Something they've said, something they've done. And it haunts them. When they look at themselves in the light of God's word, in the mirror of scripture.

And every time they look at themselves there, this voice from a way back says, remember me? I am your biggest feeling. I am the sin that still continues in your life and you haven't dealt with it yet. Maybe it's something that nobody else knows about, but yourself and God. And something always reminds you of this.

That leprosy is with you. That sin is with you. As they used to say, sin is where I am. S-I-M, sin. Sin is where I am. And when you look at yourself in the word of God, you come across again and again the fact that each one of us has sinned.

[11 : 41] None of us is righteous. No, not one. None of us has sin. And each sin that we have done, whether it be thought or word or action or original sin.

Each sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and the life that is to come. And the Lord was a sinner. But he was a leper. But he was a leper.

If you honestly look at your own life in the light of God's word, you have to come to this decision and agree with this.

That you are a sinner before God. But the Lord was looking out for Naaman.

And it is in a very unexpected way that help comes to him. The Lord had seen fit that a little girl, a captive young girl from the land of Israel, waited on Naaman's wife.

[12 : 52] Now this little girl, she would have been down in the kitchens or doing the washing up, whatever it was. She wasn't rubbing shoulders with high society in the King's presence.

The King probably didn't know she existed. But she herself, besides being attractive, she was a little girl with a heart of compassion.

A little girl who had been aware also of the prophet of God in Israel and the things that that prophet had done.

She may very well have heard fairly recently about the little boy, probably about her own age, who had died with sunstroke. And that Elisha, in a miraculous way, had raised him to life.

And other stories as well of what Elisha had done would have been current knowledge with this little girl. And she knew that the Lord was able to use him in relation to the problem that her master had with leprosy.

[14 : 03] And that's the same with young people today. You have been under the gospel ministry. You have heard of God's way of salvation. You have heard of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he receives sinners and eats with them.

That the blood of Jesus Christ is able to cleanse from all sin. And you are able to tell people. Even if you are very young. And I have heard of a saviour.

And he is able to deal with your problem. And that's what that little girl did. She said to her mistress. If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria.

He would heal him of his leprosy. But anyone who is able to raise from the dead surely is able to heal from leprosy.

This may have been the way she was thinking. And the king heard of this. And the king set wheels in motion. So that a letter was sent to the king of Israel.

[15 : 09] Which the king of Israel took the wrong way. There was a bit of animosity between Syria and Israel. And the king of Israel, he went this cloth and he said, How am I to heal somebody from his leprosy?

This man is seeking a quarrel with me. It's as if a way of getting into our nation by subversion and using tactics that are so deceptive.

But Elisha heard that the king had rent his clothing. And he said, You send them to me. And he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.

So that is Naaman's greatness and Naaman's problem. But now that the problem is being addressed.

Help is going to come from a very unexpected quarter. Naaman, it says in verse 9, Went with his horses and chariot.

[16 : 17] And he stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times. And your flesh shall be restored to you.

And you shall be clean. Can you imagine Naaman with all the regalia connected with his office as commander of the army of the king of Syria?

And can you imagine his rent in you? He wouldn't have come on his own. He would have come with a number of people. With horses and chariots.

And all the distinctiveness of his office. And he came. And he stood at the door of Elisha's house.

And the young man with Elisha said, There's somebody out there.

Oh yes. You go out and tell him to go and wash in the Jordan seven times. And he'll be clean.

Naaman became furious, it says in verse 11.

[17 : 21] It's as if his expectations were so different to what actually happened. He thought that the prophet himself would come forth.

And that he would stand. Come out to me. And stand and call on the name of the Lord his God. And wave his hand over the place and heal the repricee. And he said, It's as if he was expecting something to reflect the high honour that he himself had.

As a commander of the king's army in Syria. And now that he sees a little boy coming out to tell him to go and wash in the Jordan seven times.

And be clean. And the point he makes about the Abana and the Farper rivers of Damascus was true. And the point he makes about the Abana and the Farper rivers of Damascus was true. They were better than the waters of Jordan seven times. And the point he makes about the Abana and the Farper rivers of Damascus. And the point he makes about the Abana and the Farper rivers of Damascus was true. They were better than the waters of Jordan seven times. And they were more pure. Because very often the Jordan carried around sediment.

And the,." He thought, Abana and Farper, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel, could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And the point he makes about the Abana and the Farper rivers of Damascus was clean. They were better than the waters of Jordan, they were more pure, because very often the Jordan carried around the river was sediment. And anyone who was going to wash in the Jordan ran the risk of having sediment from the river upon them. But the other rivers of Damascus were purer water.

[18 : 57] Certainly he knew his facts. And he went away in a rage. Isn't this what happens so often? When people come with a sense that they need help. It's as if they want their pride kept intact. And they want things to be done their way. Just like this man had expectations as to how the lepers he was going to be cleansed. And when what he expected didn't happen, he was furious and went away in a rage.

But you know, the gospel is exactly like that. It's not the way people in their pride expect that healing comes. It's not the way people expected salvation to come to Israel, that it came.

The two on the road to Emmaus, they were mourning the fact that Jesus Christ had been crucified and buried. And then you remember what they said, we thought that it was through him that Israel was to be saved.

It's as if they expected Jesus of Nazareth to ascend the throne in Jerusalem and rule over the Romans and cast the Romans away from the nation.

And these men, they said, well, we thought this is the way it was going to happen. But see now what's happened. Jesus of Nazareth is dead. And this is the third day since he was buried.

[20 : 48] And when you go back even, the prophecy of Isaiah. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

And they shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us. And again in Isaiah chapter 9, unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given.

And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. And you go on again to Isaiah 53.

He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of all peace was upon him. And by his stripes we are healed. It's as if the unexpected has happened.

A virgin having a son. How unexpected is life. Life coming through death. The death of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 53] Secures life. Everlasting to those who believe in him. Who died and goes again. So we see that this man. He was curious.

Because what the message from the prophet said. Was so different to what he expected. And particularly. It knocked his pride.

Was he going to do something as simple and as ordinary. As go and dip in the river Jordan. Of all rivers. Seven times. And he went away in a rage.

I hope you don't go away in a rage. When you hear. Shall I say. The simplicity of the gospel message. What is the simplicity of the gospel message?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And thou shalt be saved. Isn't that simple? It is gloriously simple. Look unto me.

[23 : 00] And be saved. Remember the account we have. Earlier on in the Old Testament. Of the children of Israel. In the wilderness. And they were bitten by the fiery serpents.

And the Lord commanded Moses to make a brazen serpent. A serpent of brass. Erected on a pole. Commanded all those who had been bitten by the serpents.

To look to the serpent of brass. And that they would be healed. And. Well isn't that amazing? It seems so simple. But evidently many.

Who were told to do so. Didn't do so. Just as it is today. Many who are directed to Christ. Don't do so.

Many who are invited to Christ. Don't come to them. They'd rather continue. With the medals of their worldly achievements. And securing.

[24 : 00] That the pride of place continues with them. Like Naaman was willing to do. He went away from the place of decision. In a rage. Turning his back upon.

The way of cleansing. That was recommended to him. By the prophet. And the servants came near to him.

And he said. My father. If the prophet had told you to do something great. Wouldn't you have done it? If he had told you to go and conquer some nation somewhere.

To secure the cleansing of your leprosy. You would have done it. How much more then. When he says to you.

Watch. And be clean. How much more. And then verse 14 is so important.

[24 : 59] Isn't it? So he went down. See this is what he needed to do. It's as if. He had to take off.

The grand garments of his office. And in taking them off. Exposing. The fact that sin was there.

Leprosy was there. And that's what we have to do.

Come as we are. Confessing our sin. Our uncleanness. Confessing our need. Of being healed. And he went down.

And he went down. When did you go down last. On your knees. Asking that the Lord would bring his blessing. Into your life.

When did you come down. From your. High opinion of yourself. And of your own achievements. And of your own good works.

[26 : 02] And of your own righteousness. We have to come down. Off all of these pedestals. And come. To the feet of Jesus. Just as we are.

Without one plea. Except that his blood. Was shed. For me. He went down.

And dipped seven times. In the Jordan. According to the seeing. Of the man of God. And his flesh. Was restored. Like the flesh.

Of a little child. And he was clean. Isn't it amazing? The way. Health came to him.

In an unexpected way. Through the little. Girl. First of all. Commending. Elisha to. Her mistress. And then. The young man.

[27 : 00] Coming out of the door. Of Elisha. Directing him. To go. And wash. Seven times. In Jordan. With the promise. That he would be clean.

And you know. The Lord uses. People. And situations. That we don't expect. Ministers of the gospel.

Who labor. To prepare messages. For their congregations. And they come in weakness. And they come feeling. That they're not adequate. To the task.

Nevertheless. They bring the message. To you. Faithfully. As your minister. Here does. On repeated occasions. It's as if.

The Lord says. Will you not do. What they say. It seems. So straightforward. And it is. How much more.

[28 : 00] If he was to say. To you. Wash and be clean. And he went down. And he washed. And he was clean. Oh what humility.

Immediately. Reveals itself. In that man's. Submission. To the directive. Of the prophet. What humility.

At one point. He was saying. I thought he would come. And call on the name. Of his God. And put his hand. In the place. And do this. And that. Now.

He just comes. As an ordinary. Individual. With a real problem. Of leprosy. Which indicates. Sin.

And he did. What he was told. And he was clean. But then we see. The story going on. He returns.

[29 : 01] To the man of God. He and all his aides. And came. And stood before him. And he said. Indeed. Now I know. That there is no God. In all the earth. Except in Israel.

Now therefore. Please take a gift. From your servant. And he said. I will not. And he refused. Then verse 17. Particularly. Then if not.

He says. Let your servant. Be given. Two new. Loads of earth. For your servant. Will no longer offer. Either birth.

Offering. Or sacrifice. To other gods. But to the Lord. It's as if you wanted. To take a piece. Of the earth.

Of Israel. Back. To Syria. With him. Thinking. Maybe wrongly. But I think. I know. Where his heart. [29 : 57] Is coming from. Where he had found. The blessing. He wanted. To be associated. With the place. And particularly. The God. Through whom. The blessing. Of cleansing.

Came his way. He says. I no longer. Will offer. Burnt offerings. Or sacrifice. To other gods. But to the Lord. Jehovah. The one.

Only living. And through God. Isn't that the way you feel? That you want. Because of what the Lord. Has done for you.

In forgiving your sin. And cleansing you. From all iniquity. By the blood of Christ. That you want to serve. No other God. That you want to worship him.

Constantly. That you want to bow the knee. Before him. In acknowledgement. Of his grace. And love. And kindness. And mercy. You want to give yourself to him.

[30 : 54] Totally every day. Of your life. And the other thing. From verse 18. It's a burden to Naaman.

The newly cleansed man. In this thing. May the Lord pardon your servant. When my master goes into the temple of Orym. Orym. With one of the gods.

That the Syrians. Were worshipping. To worship there. And he leans on my hand. And I bow down in the temple of Orym. And I bow down in the temple of Orym.

May the Lord please pardon your servant. In this thing. And he said to him. Go in peace. It's as if his high office.

As commander of the army of the king. Meant that from time to time. The king. Would call on him. To go into the temple of his God.

[31 : 48] Orym. And this man. Naaman. Was no problem to him before this. But now that the Lord. Has come into his life. In a saving way.

He finds it a problem. To associate. With the worship of other gods. And surely that is true. With every Christian.

It's a problem. When another God. Seeks. To have influence. Over your mind and life. But this man. He wasn't now going into the temple of Orym. For himself. He was there in an official capacity. Which he saw as a bit of a problem.

But. The servant of the Lord said to him. Go in peace. It's as if. Your heart is. Where it ought to be.

[32 : 45] Determined to worship Jehovah. The one only. And living and true God. And if you have. By virtue of your office. To involve yourself. With other gods.

Well. As long as your heart isn't with you. In going in there. It's only a superficial. Involvement you have. It says here.

Go in peace. Many of us don't believe.

Whatever a. Public. Persona. Might say. There is a but. In our lives. Maybe you haven't got physical leprosy.

Maybe you've got some other illness. Maybe you have. A problem. In your life. In your family. In your work. I don't know. But almost invariably.

[33 : 49] There's a but somewhere. In the lives of people. And where do you take that but. That problem. Well take it where the little girl commended.

Name and to go. To the one who is able to heal. From the leprosy. From the leprosy of sin. And when you come to him. Do just what he says.

It may seem. Unusual. And less. Than. Flamboyant. To believe in the Lord Jesus. And you will be saved.

Some people want to add this. That. And the other thing. To give their own pride. Credence and a boost. But no.

It's no place for pride. Because when you come to Jesus. You go down. On your knees before him. And confess who you are. And be thankful for.

[34 : 49] Who he is. That he has come. To save a witch like you. And you commit yourself to him. And then. After you commit yourself to him.

He raises you. To a level. That you've never been at before. Because this man. Naaman. He was greater. The king of Syria. But after his submission.

In grace. To God's way of salvation. He was elevated. And he was now a son of God. Part of the family of God. Adopted into the family of God.

By grace. And he was now. An heir of salvation. An heir of eternal life. It may be wonderful this evening.

If each one of us knew. That power. For ourselves. And what the hymn writer said. And I'll finish with this. There is a fountain filled with blood.

[35 : 47] Drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And sinners plunged beneath that blood. Lose all that gives his stains. Where was that fountain opened?

It was opened at Calvin. Who opened it? The Lord Jesus Christ. By his sufferings. And to death. Even the cursed death of the cross. And in opening that fountain. The fountain flows as it were. Through all the means of grace in this world.

And this evening the water is flowing. And he says to us. Obey. And be cleansed. May each of us have a grace of obedience.

To obey him. In faith. Let us pray. God bless. Let's pray.

[36 : 53] Let us pray. Amen. We'll talk to his people. Amen. So. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.